

**Energy & Environment Committee
Special Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: October 22, 2018; 5:30
LOCATION: KL Binder Library, 6th Floor, COB, Kingston, NY
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairman Mary Wawro
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn A. Tantillo, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Tracey Bartels, Manna Jo Greene and Brian Woltman
ABSENT: Legislator Joseph Maloney
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Lynn Archer (arrived 5:43), Kathy Nolan, Laura Petit, Hector Rodriguez (departed 6:25); Deputy County Executive Kenneth Crannell; Ryan Goodwin, SODEXO, SUNY New Paltz.

Chairman Wawro called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Crannell gave an overview of the Department of the Environment (DOE), the work they accomplished in 2019 and the proposed 2019 budget for that department.

County Executive Mike Hein recently made a presentation to the NYS Bar Association regarding many of the environmental projects and accomplishments of Ulster County.

The Ulster County Dept. of Environment is the only one outside the metropolitan area. It is a small staff so he did not provide a flow chart. He discussed the salary compression in which the two Civil Service Environmental Planner staff members have a higher salary than the Deputy Coordinator they report to.

Some of their regular duties of the Department include

- Coordinating with other County Departments on various projects to ensure they are using environmentally sound practices
- Technical and administrative support to the Environmental Management Council
- Storm water and culvert assessment
- Renewable energy development
- Natural resource inventory and brownfield mitigation
- Watershed planning and flood mitigation

Various grants included

- \$261,000 Awarded for Composting project. The DOE contracted with Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA) and does all the reporting on the project
- Sheriff Department obtained a food waste dehydrator that will dramatically reduce the cost of trucking the waste to the UCRRA
- As the first County in NY to become a Clean Energy Community the county received a \$250,000 grant that will be used to replace the lighting at the Ulster County Jail which represents about half the electric usage of the County. Any remaining funds will be used to replace any older lighting with new LED energy efficient lighting.
- The Sheriff is purchasing an electric vehicle (EV) hybrid for a school resource officer and plans to install a charging station at a school. It will serve two purposes. 1st, to have an EV charging station in more remote parts of the county and 2nd, the EV will be wrapped in a way to include an educational component to promote clean energy.

- County received a \$84,000 CFA grant for Climate Change Resiliency Project to develop a Comprehensive Plan. Much of the work associated with this project will be contracted out due to other demands on the DOE. Ulster County is the only Silver Certified County in NYS and the City of Kingston is the only Silver Certified City. Mr. Crannell said that there is a friendly competition between the City and the County to become the first to be Gold Certified. The goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to help Ulster County attain Gold Certification.

Legislator Rodriguez felt it was unfortunate that Amanda Lavalley and Nick Hvozda, Coordinator and Dept. Coordinator of DOE were not at this meeting. The committee discussed department salaries and staffing changes last year and how they impacted the proposed 2019 budget.

Legislator Bartels suggested that future proposed budgets should show more history than just the previous year. She noted that in the past at least 4 years of the salary history was listed for each position.

Legislator Rodriguez asked for clarification of the increase in the equipment line. Mr. Crannell explained that most of this was associated with the EV infrastructure. The county has been using a process of “rip and replace” for EV infrastructure. The EV technology is evolving quickly and the county is taking advantage of a program offered by our vendor – as they replace charging stations with the latest technology, the county can keep the old EV charging station to either use elsewhere or keep for parts. He anticipates revenue to offset some of this expense but was not included in the budget because they don’t have reliable projections of those revenues. Ulster County is taking advantage of various and ever changing NYSERDA programs to support EV infrastructure.

Legislator Woltman asked for an explanation of the Professional Services line. He noted that it was amended in 2018 to 311,000 and the 2019 recommended amount is 74,000. Mr. Crannell explained this was the grant for the composting project with UCRRA and was a one-time project. (20.54)

Legislator Greene asked what funds have been set aside to purchase reusable bags as part of the roll out of the County’s plastic bag ban. Mr. Crannell and Legislator Bartels discussed a resolution to earmark \$50,000 for the purchase of reusable bags. Mr. Crannell promised to find offsets for this funding. They plan to pull together stake holders, develop an implementation plan and identify target groups to strategically distribute the bags as part of an educational effort.

Mr. Crannell went on to discuss the anticipated need for continuing education as well as an enforcement component. The committee had a brief discussion about what that enforcement and educational efforts would be over the next three years and how funding could vary as the program moves forward. Mr. Crannell discussed the potential for an exemption from the five-cent fee for people on SNAP/WIC, potential issues for food pantries serving the poor and other stake holders.

Legislator Greene noted the positive attention the County is getting from around New York State in regard to the Green Business Challenge (GBC). She described how the County Executive has partnered with the Legislature’s Climate Smart Committee to get this program off the ground. She expressed concern about developing a budget amendment to hire someone to support and coordinate this largely volunteer effort. She spoke of the wonderful job Mr. Hvozda did but was told he would not be available to continue next year. She asked Mr. Crannell how best to proceed.

Mr. Crannell suggested they should have an in-depth discussion off-line but noted that the GBC did not produce the outcomes that were expected. He praised the volunteer effort but said he was contacted by members of the Climate Smart Committee who felt the program was floundering.

Legislator Rodriguez was troubled by correspondence the County Executive sent to Legislator Greene stating that they would no longer support the Green Business Challenge. He is troubled that the Executive is abruptly backing out of this partnership. He understands that there may be concerns but suggested there may be a more eloquent way to express those concerns than saying “we are not doing this anymore.”

Mr. Crannell said the County Executive set serious climate smart goals and has been working with the Climate Smart Committee. He believes there may be better way to move forward with GBC. The committee had a brief discussion about how to begin a constructive conversation to address this critical issue.

Legislator Bartels noted that the DOE is doing great things with a very small staff. She felt it would be useful to examine what could be accomplished if the DOE had additional personnel and funds.

The committee discussed details of several programs and grants including composting with UCRRA, dehydrator at Ulster County Jail, developing haulers to focus on organics to be more cost effective for local businesses to compost, metrics of analyzing carbon credits, structuring procurements process so local municipalities can piggy-back, fish stocking with Ulster County Federated Sportsmen, well testing with water quality coordinator at DOE, 42:00

Legislator Nolan noted that working with consultants and renting equipment might be more affordable and supported this approach.

Mr. Crannell outlined some of the issues the county dealt with in the past and what they learned. He feels the County is aggressively targeting issues, drawing on state and other outside funding to maximize the effect without building a huge staff driven model. He feels the results speak for themselves and points to benchmarks and other measurements. He said many of these programs will be done contractually.

Legislator Bartels asked if there were plans for the Sheriff to have EV patrol cars.

Mr. Crannell said it is being discussed and the Sheriff is very open to it but not there yet. He outlined several other types of vehicles that were more appropriate to replace with EV such as probation and school resource officers and they are always exploring others.

Legislator Woltman explained that the City of Kingston PD is considering EV but police vehicles need to be rated as “pursuit vehicles”.

Mr. Crannell told the committee that last week the County tried out an EV Municipal Bus. He discussed other options like using bio-diesel.

Chairman Wawro ended the budget discussion and asked for a motion to go into executive session to conducting an interview.

Motion No. 4 - To move into executive session for the purpose of conducting interviews for the Recycling Oversight Committee (6:25)

Motion Made By: Legislator Woltman
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Greene
Voting in Favor: Legislators Wawro, Bartels, Greene and Woltman
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Approved

Ryan Goodwin was interviewed for the Commercial/Industrial position

Motion No.5 – To move out of executive session. (6:45)

Motion Made By: Legislator Bartels
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Woltman
Voting in Favor: Legislators Wawro, Bartels, Greene and Woltman
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Approved

Legislator Archer asked if all the questions legislators had regarding the DOE proposed 2019 budget, program and goals were answered.

The committee discussed the need for some sort of organizational chart, not just showing the four people in the department but how DOE interfaces with other County departments and projects as well as outside agencies like Cornell Cooperative Extension, Ulster County Soil and Water and UCRRA.

The committee would like the budget in all departments to show at least a 4-year salary history for each title.

Legislator Bartels acknowledged that reducing taxes to 2010 rates was commendable but would like to begin a conversation about what else is possible. She said the proposed county budget lays out the priorities of the County Executive and they usually coincide with the priorities of the legislature she wonders what else might be possible. She suggested this could enhance the legislative roll as policy makers.

The committee discussed the County Executive's decision to withdraw support of GBC. They discussed hiring a consultant for \$50,000 to work specifically with local businesses and GBC Ambassadors could go a long way to accomplishing the Climate Smart Committee's aggressive goals.

The committee discussed making GBC goals a formal policy via resolution, economic benefits of hiring a consultant vs. adding a county position and ensuring that the metrics used to measure success are appropriate.

Legislator Woltman noted Mr. Crannell offered a good overview but wanted to hear directly from the department heads. He wanted more insights into how their stated goals and objectives folds into their budget. He suggested we ask for a memorandum from the department.

Legislator Nolan noted the County Executive has set a clear goal of becoming Gold Certified and the efforts of DOE and other county departments in achieving that goal do not appear in any budget lines.

Several legislators noted that not having the department heads at this meeting to explain how they specifically interface with other county departments and agencies to meet these goals is exactly what was missing. They felt this level of detail was vital to understanding department interactions and find opportunities for new ideas or expansion of current ideas.

Chairman Wawro asked if there was any other business, hearing none

Motion to Adjourn

Motion Made By:	Legislator Greene
Motion Seconded By:	Legislator Woltman
No. of Votes in Favor:	4
No. of Votes Against:	0
Time:	7:03 pm
Respectfully submitted:	Fawn Tantillo, Deputy Clerk
Minutes Approved	November 8, 2018